



Horrible Bosses who Harass

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I recall my times at CMC Ltd, a leading IT company in India during 1993. There are office politics in every organization. However, at CMC, employees felt distressed enough to complain. Now during a meeting held to discuss harassment by bosses employees started to cry. Just imagine if the harassment level in an organization is so high that employees cry, how one expects employees to contribute to the growth and profitability of the company. It is only a matter of time before employees will leave the organization. An organization grows in revenues and profitability due to its employees. If harassment at the office drives away employees organization will atrophy and lose in the market.

In fact, a 2011 Hollywood movie, *Horrible Bosses*, actually captures this dilemma. In this 3 friends, who are harassed by their horrible bosses decide to take revenge and plan to kill their bosses. Just imagine if employees have so much hatred for bosses that they want to kill their bosses, isn't it obvious that something ought to be done. Of course, art and literature always exaggerate. But still, the fact remains that bosses do harass. And if bosses harass, then employees will quit. An organization must take measures to curb harassment by bosses. This essay entirely stays away from the topic of sexual harassment at work. Sexual harassment at work is such a big topic that an entire thesis will not suffice the breadth and width of the topic.

A monster.com survey found that almost 50% of employees were harassed by their bosses and 40% by coworkers. Work Place Bullying Institute finds that 30% of American employees are bullied and harassed at workplace. Almost 76 million employees are harassed in the USA. Work Place Bullying can be defined as repeated health harming mistreatment of an employee by another employee. This behaviour takes the form of employee abuse in forms of verbal abuse or behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating.

Wikipedia defines workplace harassment as belittling or threatening behaviour towards employees or a group of employees. Overbearing supervision, constant criticism, and delaying promotion are considered part of workplace harassment according to Wikipedia. Some nations have enacted laws to contain bullying and harassment such as the Health Work Places Bill in the United States of America.

But organizations need to do a lot more about workplace harassment. Almost every organization has policies and mechanisms to tackle sexual harassment at work.

However it is the bullying kind of harassment that is not only ignored, but also condoned and perhaps even encouraged implicitly to provide feeling of power.

But such inaction by organizations to contain and control workplace harassment can lead to toxic workplaces that can affect employee welfare and employee productivity.

Workplace Bullying Institute estimates that 77% of employees who have harassed quit companies and 13% of employees are harassed currently.

There can be many strategies to control Work Place Harassment:

1. Written Policies on Workplace Harassment
2. Established Mechanisms to tackle Work Place Harassment.
3. Punishment to Perpetrators of Workplace Harassment.

Governments need to make it mandatory by enacting laws for organizations to have policies and mechanisms to tackle workplace harassment.

Organizations can have 360-degree appraisals(subordinates evaluating superiors), Blind surveys and actually some deliberate attrition to contain harassment.

If incompetence can be ground to fire an employee, toxic behaviour can also be an adequate reason for termination of employment.

Workplace harassment needs to be tackled with the same intensity and urgency as sexual harassment at the workplace is being addressed.

HR departments in the organization have to take a serious note of possible work harassment and institute mechanisms to tackle work place harassment.